

## Chapter 2: Planning Process

### 2 Documenting the Planning Process

Documentation of the planning process, including public involvement, is required to meet FEMA's DMA 2000 (44CFR§201.4(c)(1) and §201.6(c)(1)). This section includes a description of the planning process used to develop this plan, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how all of the involved agencies participated.

#### 2.1.1 Description of the Planning Process

The Clearwater County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan was developed through a collaborative process involving all of the organizations and agencies detailed in Section 1.0 of this document. The County's local coordinator contacted these organizations directly to invite their participation and schedule meetings of the planning committee. The planning process included 5 distinct phases which were in some cases sequential (step 1 then step 2) and in some cases intermixed (step 4 completed though out the process):

1. **Collection of Data** about the extent and periodicity of wildfires in and around Clearwater County. This included an area encompassing Latah, Clearwater, Shoshone, and Kootenai Counties to insure a robust dataset for making inferences about fires in Clearwater County specifically; this included a wildfire extent and ignition profile.
2. **Field Observations and Estimations** about wildfire risks including fuels assessments, juxtaposition of structures and infrastructure to wildland fuels, access, and potential treatments by trained wildfire specialists.
3. **Mapping** of data relevant to wildfire control and treatments, structures, resource values, infrastructure, fire prone landscapes, and related data.
4. **Facilitation of Public Involvement** from the formation of the planning committee, to a public mail survey, news releases, public meetings, public review of draft documents, and acceptance of the final plan by the signatory representatives.
5. **Analysis and Drafting of the Report** to integrate the results of the planning process, providing ample review and integration of committee and public input, followed by acceptance of the final document.

Planning efforts were led by the Project Director, Dr. William E. Schlosser, of Northwest Management, Inc. Dr. Schlosser holds 4 degrees in natural resource management (A.S. geology; B.S. forest and range management; M.S. natural resource economic & finance; Ph.D. environmental science and regional planning). President of Northwest Management, Inc., Mr. Vincent Corrao, holds two degrees in natural resource management (A.S. forest management and B.S. forest resource management). Together, they led a team of resource professionals that included fire mitigation specialists, wildfire control specialists, resource management professionals, and hazard mitigation experts.

They were the point-people for team members to share data and information with during the plan's development. They and the planning team met with many residents of the county during the inspections of communities, infrastructure, and hazard abatement assessments. This methodology, when coupled with the other approaches in this process, worked effectively to integrate a wide spectrum of observations and interpretations about the project.

The planning philosophy employed in this project included the open and free sharing of information with interested parties. Information from federal and state agencies was integrated into the database of knowledge used in this project. Meetings with the committee were held throughout the planning process to facilitate a sharing of information between cooperators.

When the public meetings were held, many of the committee members were in attendance and shared their support and experiences with the planning process and their interpretations of the results.

## **2.2 Public Involvement**

Public involvement in this plan was made a priority from the inception of the project. There were a number of ways that public involvement was sought and facilitated. In some cases this led to members of the public providing information and seeking an active role in protecting their own homes and businesses, while in other cases it led to the public becoming more aware of the process without becoming directly involved in the planning process.

### **2.2.1 News Releases**

Under the auspices of the Clearwater County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Planning Committee, news releases were submitted to area news papers.

#### **2.2.1.1 Newspaper Articles**

Committee and public meeting announcements were published in the Clearwater Tribune and the Lewiston Morning Tribune ahead of each meeting. The following is an example of one of the newspaper announcements that ran in the local newspaper.

#### **Clearwater County Wildfire Mitigation Plan**

Orofino, ID --- The Clearwater County Commissioners, have created an Wildfire Mitigation Plan Committee to complete a Wildfire Mitigation Plan for Clearwater County. The Clearwater County Wildfire Mitigation Plan will include risk analysis at the community level for wildfires. Northwest Management, Inc. has been retained by Clearwater County to provide wildfire risk assessments, mapping, field inspections, interviews, and to collaborate with the committee to prepare the plan. The committee includes rural and wildland fire districts, land managers, elected officials, agency representatives, and others. Northwest Management specialists are conducting analyses of fire prone landscapes, and the wildland-urban interface. Specific mitigation activities for homes, structures, infrastructure, and resource capabilities will be proposed as part of the analysis.

The planning team will be conducting Public Meetings to discuss preliminary findings and to seek public involvement in the planning process from February 1-3, 2005. For more information on the Wildfire Mitigation Plan project in Clearwater County contact your County Commissioners, Dan Pierce at the Clearwater RC&D office at 208-882-4960 ext. 4, Tom Richards at the Northwest Management, Inc., office in Moscow at 208-883-4488, or Howard Weeks at C-PTPA in Orofino at 208-476-5612.

Public Information Meetings:

**Weippe:** February 1, 2005, Timberline High School, 7 pm - 9 pm.

**Orofino:** February 2, 2005, Ponderosa Banquet Room, 7 pm - 9 pm.

**Pierce:** February 3, 2005, Pierce Community Center, 7 pm - 9 pm.

## **2.2.2 Public Mail Survey**

In order to collect a broad base of perceptions about wildland fire and individual risk factors of homeowners in Clearwater County, a mail survey was conducted. Using a state and county database of landowners in Clearwater County, homeowners from the Wildland-Urban Interface surrounding each community were identified. In order to be included in the database, individuals were selected that own property and have a dwelling in Clearwater County, as well as a mailing address in Clearwater County. This database created a list of unique names to which was affixed a random number that contributed to the probability of being selected for the public mail survey. A total of 234 landowners meeting the above criteria were selected.

The public mail survey developed for this project has been used in the past by Northwest Management, Inc., during the execution of other WUI Wildfire Mitigation Plans. The survey used The Total Design Method (Dillman 1978) as a model to schedule the timing and content of letters sent to the selected recipients. Copies of each cover letter, mail survey, and communication are included in Appendix III.

The first in the series of mailing was sent December 19, 2004, and included a cover letter, a survey, and an offer of receiving a custom GIS map of the area of their selection in Clearwater County if they would complete and return the survey. The free map incentive was tied into assisting their community and helping their interests by participating in this process. Each letter also informed residents about the planning process. A return self-addressed envelope was included in each packet. A postcard reminder was sent to the non-respondents on January 26, 2005 encouraging their response. A final mailing, with a revised cover letter pleading with them to participate, was sent to non-respondents on February 3, 2005.

Surveys were returned during the months of December, January, and February. A total of 85 residents responded to the survey (as of February 21, 2005 – this will be updated until the final plan is completed. The effective response rate for this survey was 36%. Statistically, this response rate allows the interpretation of all of the response variables significantly at the 95% confidence level.

### **2.2.2.1 Survey Results**

A summary of the survey's results will be presented here and then referred back to during the ensuing discussions on the need for various treatments, education, and other information.

All of the respondents have a home in Clearwater County, and 96% consider this their primary residence. About 53% of the respondents were from the Orofino area, 12% were from the Pierce area, 11% were from the Weippe area, 5% from Ahsahka, 4% from Elk River, 4% from Grangemont, with the remainder from Riverside, Fraser, and Konkolville.

Almost all of the respondents (94%) correctly identified that they have emergency telephone 911 services in their area. However, their ability to correctly identify if they are covered by a rural fire district was less than hoped. Respondents were asked to identify if their home is protected by a rural or city fire district. Many of the county's residents have rural or city fire protection, with the exception of the homes in the areas of Dent and Headquarters, and the remote areas surrounding Pierce and Elk River. Of the respondents, 94% correctly identified they live in an area protected by a rural or city fire district. Approximately 16% responded they do not have a fire district covering their home, when in fact they do. Only 1% of the respondents indicated that they were inside of a fire protection district when in reality they are not protected.

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of roofing material covering the main structure of their home. Approximately 29% of respondents indicated their homes were covered with a

composite material (asphalt shingles). About 65% indicated their home were covered with a metal (eg., aluminum, tin) roofing material. Roughly 6% of the respondents indicated they have a wooden roofing material such as shakes or shingles.

Residents were asked to evaluate the proximity of trees within certain distances of their homes. Often, the density of trees around a home is an indicator of increased fire risk. The results are presented in Table 2.1

**Table 2.1 Survey responses indicating the proximity of trees to homes.**

<b>Number of Trees</b>	<b>Within 250 feet of your home</b>	<b>Within 75 feet of your home</b>
None	40%	56%
Less than 10	24%	27%
Between 10 and 25	34%	9%
More than 25	0%	0%

Approximately 86% of those returning the survey indicated they have a lawn surrounding their home. Of these individual home sites, 75% indicated they keep this lawn green through the fire season. 40% of respondents said they have brush within 75 feet of their homes.

The average driveway length of the respondents was approximately 551 feet long, from their main road to their parking area. Roughly 5% of the respondents had a driveway over ½ mile long, and a corresponding 13% had a driveway over ¼ of a mile long. Of these homes with lengthy driveways, roughly 19% have turnouts allowing two vehicles to pass each other in the case of an emergency. Approximately 59% of all homeowners indicated they have an alternative escape route, with the remaining 41% indicating only one-way-in and one-way-out. 85 of respondents indicated that their driveways are steep requiring 4-wheel drive during slippery or icy conditions.

Nearly all respondents (99%) indicated they have some type of tools to use against a wildfire that threatens their home. Table 2.2 summarizes these responses.

**Table 2.2. Percent of homes with indicated fire fighting tools in Clearwater County.**

93% – Hand tools (shovel, Pulaski, etc.)
20% – Portable water tank
18% – Stationery water tank
36% – Pond, lake, or stream water supply close
24% – Water pump and fire hose
26% – Equipment suitable for creating fire breaks (bulldozer, cat, skidder, etc.)

One survey question asked which type of media their household used to obtain information on emergencies situations within the county. 67% replied that they use the television, 80% the radio, 56% relied on newspapers, and 24% had a police scanner.

Roughly 47% of the respondents in Clearwater County indicated they have someone in their household trained in wildland fire fighting. Approximately 22% indicated someone in the household had been trained in structural fire fighting. Approximately 75% of respondent's households had someone trained in 1<sup>st</sup> Aid and CPR. However, it is important to note that these questions did not specify a standard nor did it refer to how long ago the training was received.

A couple of questions in the survey related to on-going fire mitigation efforts households may be implementing. Respondents were asked if they conduct a periodic fuels reduction program near their home sites, such as grass or brush burning. Approximately 59% answered affirmative to this question, while 34% responded that livestock (cattle, horses, sheep) graze the grasses and forbs around their home sites.

Respondents were asked to complete a fuel hazard rating worksheet to assess their home's fire risk rating. An additional column titled "results" has been added to the table, showing the percent of respondents circling each rating (Table 2.3).

**Circle the ratings in each category that best describes your home.**

Table 2.3. Fuel Hazard Rating Worksheet		Rating	Results
<b>Fuel Hazard</b>	Small, light fuels (grasses, forbs, weeds, shrubs)	1	56%
	Medium size fuels (brush, large shrubs, small trees)	2	24%
	Heavy, large fuels (woodlands, timber, heavy brush)	3	20%
<b>Slope Hazard</b>	Mild slopes (0-5%)	1	43%
	Moderate slope (6-20%)	2	28%
	Steep Slopes (21-40%)	3	27%
	Extreme slopes (41% and greater)	4	1%
<b>Structure Hazard</b>	Noncombustible roof and noncombustible siding materials	1	26%
	Noncombustible roof and combustible siding material	3	56%
	Combustible roof and noncombustible siding material	7	6%
	Combustible roof and combustible siding materials	10	11%
<b>Additional Factors</b>	Rough topography that contains several steep canyons or ridges	+2	Average -1.9 pts
	Areas having history of higher than average fire occurrence	+3	
	Areas exposed to severe fire weather and strong winds	+4	
	Areas with existing fuel modifications or usable fire breaks	-3	
	Areas with local facilities (water systems, rural fire districts, dozers)	-3	

#### Calculating your risk

Values below are the average response value to each question.

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 \text{Fuel hazard} & \underline{1.63} & \times \text{Slope Hazard} \quad \underline{1.86} = \underline{3.05} \\
 \text{Structural hazard} & + & \underline{3.47} \\
 \text{Additional factors} & (+ \text{ or } -) & \underline{-1.92} \\
 \text{Total Hazard Points} & = & \underline{4.59}
 \end{array}$$

**Table 2.4. Percent of respondents in each risk category as determined by the survey respondents.**

00% – Extreme Risk = 26 + points
2% – High Risk = 16–25 points
32% – Moderate Risk = 6–15 points
66% – Low Risk = 6 or less points

Maximum household rating form score was 17 points, as assessed by the homeowners. These numbers were compared to observations made by field crews trained in wildland fire fighting. These results indicate that for the most part, these indications are lower than the risk rating assigned by the “professionals”. Anecdotal evidence would indicate that Clearwater County landowners involved in this survey are unaware of some of the wildfire risk factors present in Clearwater County.

Finally, respondents were asked “if offered in your area, would members of your household attend a free, or low cost, one-day training seminar designed to teach homeowners in the wildland–urban interface how to improve the defensible space surrounding your home and adjacent outbuildings?” A majority of the respondents, 60% indicated a desire to participate in this type of training.

Homeowners were also asked, “How do you feel Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Mitigation projects should be funded in the areas surrounding homes, communities, and infrastructure such as power lines and major roads?” Responses are summarized in Table 2.5.

**Table 2.5. Public Opinion of Wildfire Mitigation Funding Preferences.**

	Mark the box that best applies to your preference		
	100% Public Funding	Cost-Share (Public & Private)	Privately Funded (Owner or Company)
Home Defensibility Projects	18%	33%	27%
Community Defensibility Projects	35%	36%	5%
Infrastructure Projects Roads, Bridges, Power Lines, Etc.	53%	12%	15%

### 2.2.3 Committee Meetings

The following list of people who participated in the planning committee meetings, volunteered time, or responded to elements of the Clearwater County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan’s preparation.

- Tom Richards.....Northwest Management, Inc.
- Bill Maison.....Clearwater County Emergency Services
- Bill Wilkinson.....USDA Forest Service
- Chuck Doty.....Clearwater Resource and Development Council
- Dan Pierce .....Clearwater Resource and Development Council
- Dave Summers .....Idaho Department of Lands
- Dick Hodge.....Clearwater Resource and Development Council

- Don Ebert .....Clearwater County Commissioner
- Howard Weeks .....Clearwater-Potlatch Timber Protection Agency
- John Erixson .....Northwest Management, Inc.
- John Willard .....Sunnyside Rural Fire Department
- Kimberly Nelson .....USDA Forest Service
- Lauri Stifanick.....Clearwater County
- Mary Fritz .....Idaho Department of Lands
- Michael Caughran .....Clearwater County Emergency Services
- Mike Lubke .....USDA Forest Service
- Paul Pence .....U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Robert Tardif .....U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Rusty Eck .....Clearwater-Potlatch Timber Protection Agency
- Stan Leach .....Clearwater County Commissioner
- Tami Parkinson .....USDA Forest Service
- Tom McWilliams .....USDA Forest Service
- John DeGroot.....Nez Perce Tribe
- Sandy Holt.....Nez Perce Tribe

Committee Meetings were scheduled and held on the following dates:

#### **2.2.3.1.1 September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2004 – Clearwater County Courthouse**

Meeting began at approximately 9:00 AM. The meeting was well attended by Clearwater County Commissioners, Emergency Management, USFS, Idaho Department of Lands, Clearwater-Potlatch Timber Protective Association, Clearwater Fire Chiefs Assn., Clearwater RC&D, Bureau of Land Management, and US Army Corps of Engineers.

Meeting welcome by Tom Richards and John Erixson of Northwest Management, Inc. John Erixson presented slide show of FMP planning process for a FEMA compliant plan. Discussed what a WUI is, how it is defined. Did not have a current Clearwater County WUI map to show to committee members. NMI will bring a copy to the next committee meeting.

It was noted that Potlatch Corporation, Nez Perce Tribe, Rural Fire Departments, City Fire Departments were absent from the this first committee meeting. Those organizations will be invited to future meetings and be included on mailing and contact lists. Tom Richards will contact those organizations to get their representatives to the meetings.

NMI handed out a sample copy of the media release to be sent to the local newspapers. The Clearwater Tribune and the Lewiston Morning Tribune were identified as the newspapers that the Media Release will be sent to. It was suggested that Eric Barker of the Lewiston be contacted to write a story on Clearwater County's effort to reduce the wildfire losses within the county.

Changes within the Press Release—Tell where the money is coming from to fund the FMP. State that it is not funded by Clearwater County. The Press Release should originate from the

Clearwater County Commissioners, not Northwest Management, Inc. The word “mitigate should be changed to “reduce”. “Reduce” has a clearer meaning to people than “mitigate”.

Handed out and reviewed the Survey that will be sent to approximately 200 to 250 rural Clearwater County residents. Committee asked to review and critique.

Additional Questions—Add a question to ask the people where they get information on emergency situations within the county. Add a question asking if the residents rural address is identifiable and visible from the main access road.

Changes—Add a question to have the residents define the width of their driveway—to move equipment and emergency personnel in and out. Try to find out if the driveway is wide enough for emergency vehicles to pass—18’ min. width.

Handed out draft community assessments for communities that were identified by the federal government as communities at risk from wildfire. Discussion centered on what a community is. It was noted that most areas at risk from wildfire are not the traditional defined community, but are rather decentralized clusters of structures and residences. These areas need to be addressed in the plan. Howard Weeks said that the CPTPA has previously identified most of these areas within the county. He has agreed to supply this information to the committee.

Primary and Secondary Access Routes—Attempted to look at NMI supplied maps to identify Primary and Secondary access routes—Map was at a difficult scale to delineate these routes. It was agreed that we will look at this item at the next committee meeting. Also, Christine Frei, CEDA, said that this has been done for the Clearwater County all hazards plan. She will share this information with the committee and NMI for inclusion into the plan and for consistency between the two plans. She also indicated that through the AHMP process, they have identified the critical county structures. Tom Richards will try to set up meeting with Christine to review.

Rural Fire Districts—Bill Maison indicated that the Greer Fire District has been dissolved. There is a new fire district called the Upper Fords Creek Rural Fire district. At next Committee meeting, committee will review wildland and rural fire district boundaries. NMI will have maps with the boundaries on it.

Handed out the Resource and Capabilities Surveys to the Committee. Most of the City and Rural Chiefs were absent from the meeting. Bill Maison took these surveys and indicated that he will get the surveys to the appropriate organization. It was suggested that NMI attend a session of the Clearwater Fire Chiefs Assn. to go over FMP planning process with that group. Tom Richards will follow up on this suggestion.

Discussed fire treatments briefly at meeting. Most of the agency representatives will try to get something together with NMI.. Tom Richards will contact the following individuals to follow through on this.

Bill Wilkinson—USFS

Dave Summers—IDL

Mary Fritz—IDL

Howard Weeks—CPTPA

Mike VanderPas—BLM

Paul Pence—US Army Corps of Engineers

Did not definitively set the next Committee or the Public Meetings. Suggested that the public meetings should be held in Orofino, Weippe and Pierce. These meetings will likely be held in January. Next committee meeting to be held in mid-November. Tom Richards will contact all to set next committee meeting.



### **2.2.3.1.2 November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2004 – Clearwater County Courthouse**

Meeting began at approximately 2:00 PM. Meeting welcome by Tom Richards and Bill Schlosser of Northwest Management, Inc.

The meeting was well attended by Emergency Management, USFS, Idaho Department of Lands, Clearwater-Potlatch Timber Protective Association, Clearwater Fire Chiefs Assn., Clearwater RC&D, and US Army Corps of Engineers, Potlatch Corporation.

#### **Set Meeting Dates**

Public Meetings—Week of January 31-3, 2005  
Committee Meeting—Jan. 18, 2005  
Committee Meeting—Feb. 15, 2005  
Committee Meeting—Plan Review—March 1, 2005  
Plan Public Review—March 8, 2005  
All Plan Comments Due by March 22, 2005

#### **Review of the Fire Mitigation Plan Process**

Bill review the FMP planning process for a FEMA compliant plan.

#### **Infrastructure**

**Roads**—Identified Primary and Secondary Roads—Highlighted on maps

Primary Routes:

Southwick Highway  
Dent Road  
Musselshell Road  
Carrot Ridge  
FS Road 100

Roads limit access for fire/emergency vehicles—in new subdivisions P&Z should require a road with an 18' width minimum, also need to improve the current infrastructure

P&Z rules should be a mitigation item in policy.

**Power lines**—Well identified on maps

**Water Supply**—Reviewed on maps

Wells

Springs

Surface Water Collection points—Community water supplies—Elk River and Headquarters office have surface collection points. Also Orofino out of Orofino Creek.

**Pierce**—Is in need of a new water supply system.

**Repeaters**—Marked on map—Should have the following

Teakean Butte—Sheriff and resources(IDL, COE, CPTPA)  
Norton Knob—Law enforcement  
Elk Butte—Everyone  
Gilbert Grade-USFS  
Junction Mtn. -USFS  
Gold Hill -USFS  
Eagle Point-USFS  
Hemlock Butte-USFS  
Osier Ridge-USFS  
Woodrat—IDL

## **Assessments**

Howard Weeks said that the CPTPA will conduct Community Assessments on the following areas:

- Rudo-Grangemont area
- Dent
- Lakeview Estates
- Gilbert Grade
- Sunnyside
- Freeman Creek

Will address access, safety, fuels, structures, safety zones, water sources, power lines, and capabilities, etc.

Additional areas of concern

- Wells Bench
- The Ranchettes
- Deception Saddle/Independence Creek—Kelly Creek area—many private cabins in that area.

## **Fire Service Capabilities**

Need to strengthen capabilities county wide by supporting the RFD's financially.

### **2.2.3.1.3 January 21, 2005 – Clearwater National Forest Supervisor Office**

Meeting began at approximately 2:00 PM

The meeting was well attended by Emergency Management, USFS, Idaho Department of Lands, Clearwater-Potlatch Timber Protective Association, Clearwater Fire Chiefs Assn., Clearwater RC&D, and US Army Corps of Engineers, Potlatch Corporation.

## **Updates**

Provided updates on Public Survey and Public Meetings. Encouraged Committee members to inform residents of the upcoming Public Meetings.

CPTPA provided NMI with community assessments.

**Priority Mitigation areas**—Fuels Treatments—Includes home defensible space programs

- Elk River Watershed and Elk River
- Lakeview Estates
- View Point
- Sunnyside
- Wells Bench Ranchettes
- Gilbert Grade
- Upper Fords Cr.
- Grangemont/Rudo
- Dent
- Freeman Cr.

## **Infrastructure Improvements**

Access Improvements:

Ahsahka Grade—Poor access for emergency equip. Randy Curtis has cost information for improvements.

## **Recommended New RFD's**

- Orofino RFD expansion up to Harmony Heights-Deer Creek Boundary
- Twin Ridges expansion
- Harmony Heights—New RFD Recommended

Gilbert Grade—New RFD recommended  
Pierce to Headquarters area—New RFD recommended  
Some uncovered areas in Lower Fords Creek  
Dent area

FEMA has money available for building fire houses, but not purchasing land.

**Water Development**—Areas where water needed and what is needed

**Sunnyside and Cavendish**—10,000 gallon subsurface tanks

**Ahsahka**—Need pond water source

Howard Weeks will come up with cost for additional water development. Also number of new ponds needed.

**Policy in new developments**

(P&Z should Adopt and FMP should support this new policy)—That routes into subdivisions should be reviewed by local Fire Chief to insure that the road is built to standards for Emergency Equip.

**Home Defensible** Space Guidelines—Not Code but recommendations for new buildings within the interface—

**Rural Addressing**—County is still working on it.

## **2.2.4 Public Meetings**


Public meetings were held during the planning process, as an integral component to the planning process. It was the desire of the planning committee, and the Clearwater County Commissioners to integrate the public's input into the development of the fire mitigation plan.

Formal public meetings were scheduled on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004, at Weippe, Idaho, on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005, at Orofino, Idaho, and on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005, at Pierce, Idaho. The purpose of these meetings was to share information on the planning process with a broadly representative cross section of Clearwater County landowners. Each meeting had wall maps posted in the meeting rooms with many of the analysis results summarized specifically for the risk assessments, location of structures, fire protection, and related information. The formal portion of the presentations included a PowerPoint presentation made by Toby Brown. During his presentations, comments from committee members, fire chiefs, and others were encouraged in an effort to engage the audience in a discussion.

### **2.2.4.1 Meeting Notices**

Public notices of this meeting were printed in the Clearwater Tribune the week prior to and the week of the meetings. Announcements were posted around the county and distributed to fire districts in Clearwater County.

Figure 2.1. Public meeting announcement used in Clearwater County.




# Clearwater County, Idaho

## Wildfire

## Mitigation Plan

## Public Meetings!



**Weippe:** February 1, 2005, Timberline High School, 7 pm - 9 pm.

**Orofino:** February 2, 2005, Ponderosa Banquet Room, 7 pm - 9 pm.

**Pierce:** February 3, 2005, Pierce Community Center, 7 pm - 9 pm.

Learn about the assessments of Wildfire Risk and the Wildland-Urban Interface of Clearwater County. Discuss **YOUR** priorities for how our communities can best mitigate these risks.

These public meetings will address the **Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan** for our communities. These meetings are open to the public and will include slideshow presentations from wildfire mitigation specialists working on the Clearwater County Wildfire Mitigation Plan. Public input is being sought in order to better frame the County's efforts of wildfire mitigation treatments, fire district resource enhancements, and public land management.

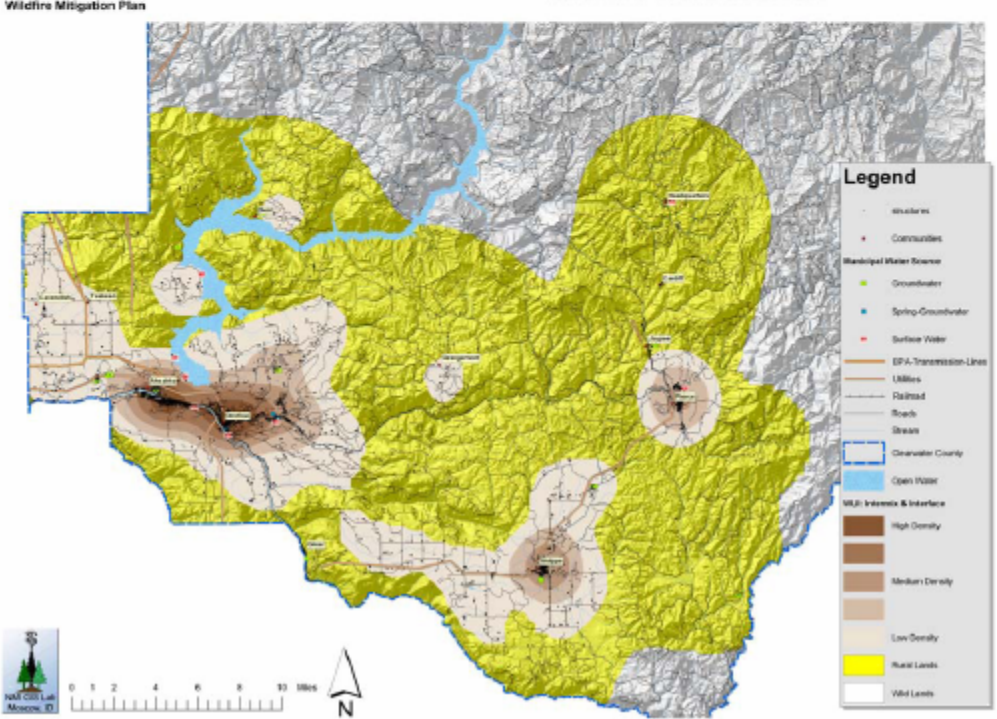
This meeting will last for approximately 1.5 hours.

*Please attend and participate!*

For more information on Hazard Mitigation Plan projects in Clearwater County, contact your County Commissioners, Dan Pierce with the Clearwater RC&D office at 208-882-4960 ext. 4, Tom Richards at the Northwest Management, Inc., office in Moscow at 208-883-4488, or Howard Weeks at C-PTPA in Orofino at 208-476-5612. **We'll see you there!**

Clearwater County, Idaho  
Wildland-Urban Interface  
Wildfire Mitigation Plan

Wildland-Urban Interface



It was made clear to all in attendance that their input was welcome and encouraged, as specific treatments had not yet been decided, nor had the risk assessment been completed. Attendees were told that they could provide oral comment during these meetings, they could provide written comment to the meetings, or they could request more information in person to discuss the plan. In addition, attendees were told they would have an opportunity to review the draft plan prior to its completion to further facilitate their comments and input.

The formal presentations lasted approximately 1 hour and included many questions and comments from the audience. Following the meetings, many discussions continued with the committee members and the general public discussing specific areas, potential treatments, the risk analysis, and other topics.

The following are comments, questions or suggestions from the meetings:

#### **2.2.4.2 Weippe Public Meeting**

##### **February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005 – Timberline High School – 7 to 9 pm**

Toby Brown presented an overview of the Fire Mitigation process that covered evaluation of risks, development of wildland urban interface zones, identification of mitigation activities and a summary of local resources and capabilities. Following Toby's presentation there was discussion among those that attended in regards to fire districts, resources and capabilities, mitigation activities and infrastructure needs for the county and local area.

#### **Infrastructure Needs**

##### **Road improvements**

Greer Grade—a lot of new home construction going on in this area. Need to make sure access roads to home are adequate for emergency vehicles. When new subdivisions are in the planning stage the developers are supposed to have the Rural Fire Chiefs check their access. This does not always happen. An Educational opportunity rather than a policy change. Could have a check off box on building permits to have the builders contact the appropriate Fire Chief.

Upper and Lower Fords Creek need road improvements

Grangemont Road needs improvement.

Lolo Creek-Roads going into homes are narrow, windy and steep.

##### **Water Improvements**

Commissioner Ebert would like to have the support of the Rural Fire Chiefs and Cptpa for the construction of Deyo Reservoir which is planned near Frasier.

Dry Hydrants—need them in both the Lower Fords Creek area and Weippe Prairie

Map of all the water sources—CPTPA has created this map and the fire chiefs would like to see it distributed more widely. Especially needed within the Frasier area.

Pierce needs extra water storage—they cannot re-fill their tank fast enough during high water use(fires) or droughty conditions. Set up a fill site in the creek during emergency fire.

#### **Fire Stations**

All Fire Departments need to have a backup power source-generator. There is also a need for building upgrades.

## **Rural Fire Districts**

One is needed in the Pierce area. Only have a city department and it does not cover the area outside of town. Probably won't happen, tax/money problems.

## **Communications**

Communications are adequate right now. However, if the country converts to digital radios there will be a need for additional and new repeaters and radios. It will be expensive.

## **Mitigation Activities**

A need for defensible space program around peoples homes. Clean-up brush and trees.

Road improvement—as stated above and into and out of homes and subdivisions—long term. Will be a major challenge for Clearwater County in the future.

## **Zoning**

P and Z is updating zoning map which will guide future development in the rural areas of the County.

## **Education**

Defensible Space—Education through schools, county fairs, pamphlets with the building permits, etc.

Education on the benefits of Rural Fire Districts—Assessment vs. insurance costs.

## **Volunteers and Training**

All of the RFD's need additional bodies to help fight fire. Have tried High School, Junior Firefighters program, but it did not seem to work out. They have ample opportunity for training through the Fire Chiefs assn., CPTPA, it is just a matter of folks showing up for the training—they need the time and convincing to attend training.

### **2.2.4.3 Orofino Public Meeting**

#### **February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005 – Ponderosa Banquet Room – 7 to 9 pm**

The public meeting at the Ponderosa Restaurant began at 7 pm with the formal presentation by Toby Brown from NMI. Afterwards, there was an informal discussion among attendees of the emergency response issues and pre-disaster mitigation projects that would help the county become more prepared for a wildland fire.

Fire Districts:

- International Fire Code is difficult for local fire departments to enforce. It would help if all permittees were notified of the minimum standards before construction.
- There are a lot of liability issues associated with fire departments including response to fires not within their jurisdiction and putting firefighters lives at risk to protect undefensible homes.
- All rural fire districts have multi-channel radios.
- There are mutual aid agreements set up between all rural fire departments and also with CPTPA

- Need rural fire protection in Harmony Heights, Dent Acres, and Lower Fords Creek either through annexation into an existing district or creation of a new one. Orofino RFD recently bought land to establish an additional station near Konkolville.
- Upper Fords RFD needs a station to house equipment.
- All fire departments need more and younger volunteers. Orofino RFD sponsors several high school programs designed to recruit volunteers that is working.
- Greer FD contracts the Orofino RFD to respond to their area due to a lack of funding, people, or need.
- It would be beneficial to everyone if the current fire districts joined together. This would reduce the amount of paperwork and increase funding opportunities. However, annexation and merging are complicated processes also.
- Most districts are in need of a grant writer due to the complexity of the process. It was suggested that all of the districts go to together to get funding for one grant writer for all of them to share.
- Getting PDM grants for buildings is easier if the structure can be used for multiple purposes such as emergency shelter, training facility, storage, food preparation, and has a back up power source.
- Most districts can't even afford matching funds although much of the matching can come from "in kind" hours such as training or volunteer labor. Nevertheless, several districts don't have a storage facility for new equipment.
- Upper Fords Creek RFD cannot reach many of the homes that are down in the canyon due to the steep and dangerous road conditions.
- Most county roads are need of some type of repair or reconstruction. Resurfacing, widening, general maintenance, or complete reconstruction is needed specifically on Wells Bench Cutoff, Upper Fords Creek Road, Lower Fords Creek Road, Old Ahsahka Grade, Old Peck Grade, Crockett Bench, Deer Creek Road, and Huckleberry Road. Many private roads, particularly around Freeman Creek, are too narrow and steep for fire trucks or have heavy timber type fuels abutting the road.
- Shores of Dworshak are too steep and long for a boat to be helpful to fight fires. There is one boat currently with a Mark III pump, but it would not be able to pump or draft to fill up trucks.
- Fire districts may be able to get more grants if they file jointly or under an umbrella organization like the RC&D.

#### Communication:

- Repeater locations: Bald Mountain, Teaken, and Elk Butte (installing another on Gilbert Grade – Forest Service land). County has good radio coverage.
- Elk Butte repeater has generator that will provide power for 20 days. Handheld radios will also last about 20 days on back up supplies of batteries.

#### Water Development

- CPTPA has developed water sources mapped throughout the county as well as a description of each one's capability; however, most of these are in the uplands areas. They also have many big tenders and giant pumps to refill them quickly.

- The county needs to get maps showing locations for all the water sources, including the WUI, that CPTPA doesn't have covered.

#### Miscellaneous

- The county needs to fund the GIS program to get decent maps, etc. for our fire depts., police, and other emergency responders.
- Recent emergency experiences show the capabilities and resilience of the county.
- The road department helps keep brush away from road right-of-way.
- Most county administration buildings, shelters, etc. do not have alternative power source.
- Landowners county-wide are in need of wildfire awareness education.
- Project Impact – this grant allowed the county to fund more wildfire training, erect fire prevention signs and current fire risk warning signs, and publish educational brochures. Brochures were handed out to real estate companies, schools, fire departments, federal and state agencies, and several other entities.
- Door-to-door education seems to be very effective. It would also be helpful to have some “example” homes that people could drive to. IDL has done door-to-door programs to give defensible space evaluations. They found that many people will volunteer to do mitigation work around their homes once they are aware of fire risk situation. Local districts may also benefit from this by finding new structures they weren't previously aware of. Insurance agencies may be the ones making the push for people to do mitigation work around homes by canceling policies for those who don't.
- Some locals refused to fill out the survey because they thought it was intrusive and they didn't know where the information was going. NMI needs to make sure the fire departments are aware of the survey, so they can answer local questions.

#### **2.2.4.4 Pierce Public Meeting**

##### **February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005 – Pierce Community Center – 7 to 9 pm**

Tera began the formal presentation at 7 pm and lasted approximately 30 minutes. After the presentation, the group engaged in a more informal discussion of the fire hazard issues in the Pierce area. Discussion points were as follows.

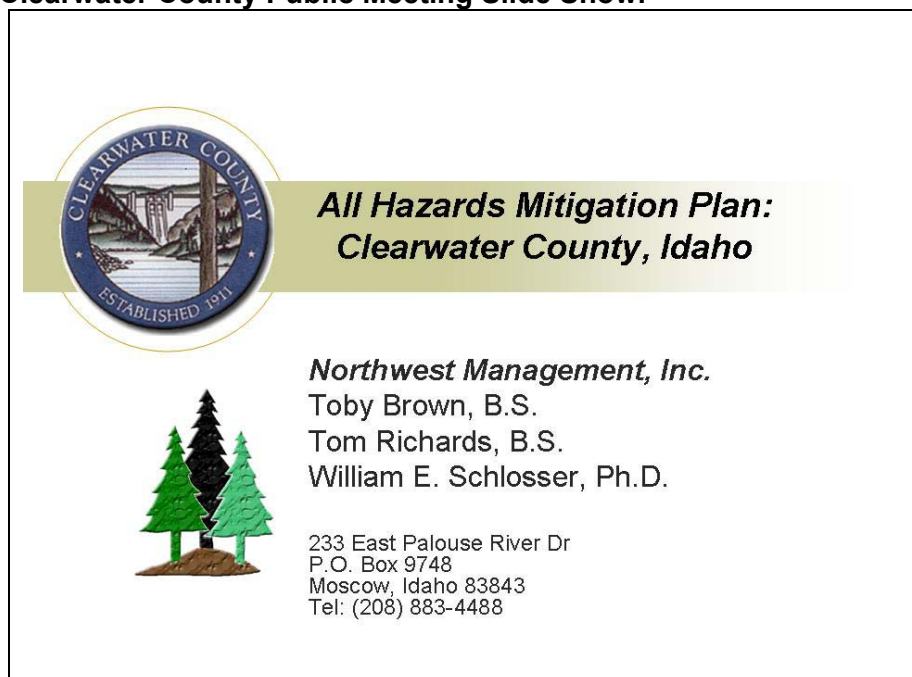
- The primary issues involve the inability of a local official to turn off the power during a fire. Instead they must wait (sometimes up to 2 hours) for an Avista employee to come all the way to Pierce in order to flip the switch. They also cannot shut power off from the substation in Orofino because that would shut down all of the power to the entire area, including the city water supply.
- Pierce uses surface water runoff from the Canal Creek Watershed for their main supply of drinking water. The watershed boundaries are encompassed by the current WUI. Pierce may need to update Watershed Management Plan. An alternative power supply is needed for the city water system.
- Alternative fuel sources are available during a prolonged power outage including the bulk plant in Jaypee and Orofino.
- The Pierce area would benefit from cell phone coverage.
- The local fire department needs access to GIS maps of current water sources and their descriptions.



- Rural addressing and road signs need improved (County is working on this project). Pierce area still working on familiarity basis.
- There are fire hazard education needs throughout the area. Many homeowners would probably volunteer to do fire mitigation projects if they were aware of the risk to their homes and families.
- Power company will trim lines around homes for free, but they need to be contacted. People also need to be aware that vegetation near power lines is a fire risk.
- Expansion of the Pierce rural fire department is being discussed. Judgetown area to the south needs protection.
- The Pierce RFD needs a more centrally located building as well as their own water tender. CPTPA may not be able to respond quickly enough with their tenders. Pierce also needs more volunteers and more training. May be able to bribe volunteers by discounting water or sewer bills.
- Many roads near Pierce need improvements, particularly paving. Gravel roads get very dusty, which causes visibility problems during an emergency response. They must stagger trucks in order to see the road.
- Developing dry hydrants near the creek running through town may alleviate some of the problems associated with turning off the power to the city water supply. The water can be pumped fast enough; however, it cannot be treated fast enough to keep the tank full. Need an alternative source.
- Due to the lack of rural homes in the area, it might be more feasible to do community defensible space projects rather individual home projects. This would be especially helpful around Judgetown.

#### 2.2.4.5 Public meeting slide show

**Figure 2.2. Clearwater County Public Meeting Slide Show.**



The public meeting slide show (title slide above) is outlined below.

**Table 2.6. Public meeting slide show**

Slide 1



**All Hazards Mitigation Plan:  
Clearwater County, Idaho**

**Northwest Management, Inc.**  
Toby Brown, B.S.  
Tom Richards, B.S.  
William E. Schlosser, Ph.D.

233 East Palouse River Dr  
P.O. Box 9748  
Moscow, Idaho 83843  
Tel: (208) 883-4488



Slide 2

### Northwest Management, Inc.

- Serving the Western U.S. since 1984
  - Main Office in Moscow, Idaho
    - Hayden, Idaho
    - Caldwell, Idaho
    - Deer Park, Washington
    - Helena, Montana
  - Full Service Natural Resource Consultants
    - Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Planning
    - All Hazards Mitigation Planning
- Providing a balanced approach to natural resource management*
- 

Slide 3

### Cooperative Effort: Clearwater County Planning Team

*To Assess Natural & Man Caused Hazards and develop a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Strategy to reduce the losses experienced within the County.*



Slide 4

### FEMA All Hazards Mitigation Plan

- Wildland Fire
- Flooding
- Severe Weather
  - Winter Storm
  - Tornadoes/Wind Storms
- Landslides
- Earthquakes
- Terrorism and Civil Unrest
- Plus others depending on a Hazard Profile



Each Hazard is one "Chapter" of the AHMP  
*Required by November 1, 2004 for all counties*

Slide 5

### Phase I Hazard Profile



Slide 6

### FEMA Requirements (Outstanding Rating)

- Adoption by Local Government Body
- Multi-Jurisdictional Planning
- Identification of Hazards & Risk Assessment
  - Profiling Hazard Events
  - Mapping Juxtaposition of Hazards, Structures, Infrastructure
  - Potential Dollar Losses to Vulnerable Structures (B/C Analysis)
- Documented Planning Process
- Assessing Vulnerability
- Mitigation Goals
- Analysis of Mitigation Measures
- Monitoring, Evaluating & Updating the Plan (5 year cycles)
- Implementation Through Existing Programs
- Public Involvement

Slide 7

### Wildfire Mitigation: National Policy

- **National Fire Plan (2000)**
  - Preparedness
  - Rehabilitation & Restoration
  - Hazardous Fuel Reduction
  - Community Protection
  - Accountability
- **Statewide Implementation Strategy**
  - Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security
  - Idaho Implementation Strategy of the National Fire Plan

Slide 8

### Healthy Forests Restoration Act

- Strengthens public participation in developing high priority projects;
- Reduces the complexity of environmental analysis allowing federal land agencies to use the best science available to actively manage land under their protection;
- Creates a pre-decisional objections process encouraging early public participation in project planning; and
- Issues clear guidance for court action challenging HFRA projects.

Slide 9

## Funding Opportunities

- Federal Monies
  - National Fire Plan
  - Healthy Forests Restoration Act
  - Federal Emergency Management Agency
- State Monies
  - Statewide Implementation Efforts
  - Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security
- The Goal is Hazard Reduction
  - Protection of People and Structures
  - Protection of Infrastructure
  - Protection of Economy
  - Protection of Ecosystems

Slide 10

## Recommendations

- WUI Safety & Policy
- People & Structures
- Infrastructure
- Resources & Capabilities
- Regional Land Management Recommendations

We will revisit this list at the end of the presentation...

Slide 11



Slide 12



Slide 13



Slide 14



Slide 15



Slide 16





Slide 17



Slide 18

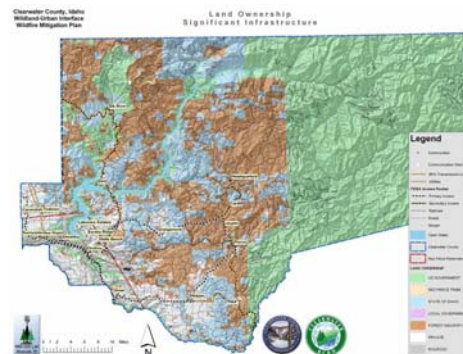
## Hazard Mitigation Approach

- Hazard Profile
- Risk Assessment
- Vulnerability Appraisal
- Mitigation Strategy Development
- Prioritization and Planning
- Implement the Plan!

Slide 19



Slide 20



Slide 21



Slide 22



Slide 23



Slide 24



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## Wildland-Urban Interface

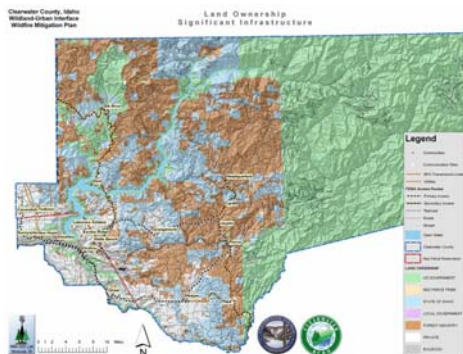
- **Interface Condition** – a situation where structures abut wildland fuels. There is a clear line of demarcation between the structures and the wildland fuels along roads or back fences. The development density for an interface condition is usually 3+ structures per acre.
- **Intermix Condition** – a situation where structures are scattered throughout a wildland area. There is no clear line of demarcation, the wildland fuels are continuous outside of and within the developed area. The development density in the intermix ranges from structures very close together to one structure per 40 acres.
- **Occluded Condition** – a situation, normally within a city, where structures abut an island of wildland fuels (park or open space). There is a clear line of demarcation between the structures and the wildland fuels along roads and fences. The development density for an occluded condition is usually similar to that found in the interface condition and the occluded area is usually less than 1,000 acres in size, and
- **Rural Condition** – a situation where the scattered small clusters of structures (ranches, farms, resorts, or summer cabins) are exposed to wildland fuels. There may be miles between these clusters.

Slide  
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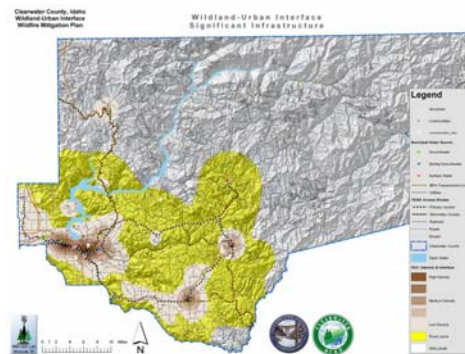
## Defining Clearwater County's Wildland-Urban Interface

- Unique to each area & it changes over time
- Based on where structures are currently located
- Uses mathematical formulae and geospatial relationships to visually represent where the WUI exists
- *When you see it, you'll understand what we mean*

Slide  
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Slide  
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Slide  
29



Slide  
30



Slide  
31

## Preparedness

- City Fire Protection
- Rural Fire Protection
- Wildland Fire Protection

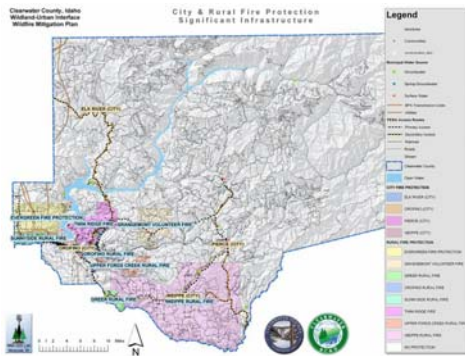


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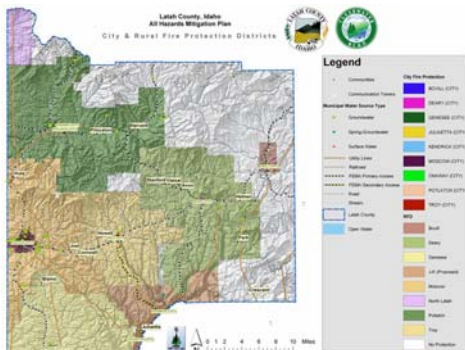
Slide  
33



Slide  
34



Slide  
35



Slide  
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### Public Involvement

- Public Mail Survey was sent to 230 households in Clearwater County
  - A total of 35 surveys were returned so far (15% response rate), 3<sup>rd</sup> mailing this week
- Three Public Meetings will be held in February

Slide  
37

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Slide  
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### Written Plan Completion

- Committee will review the draft document first
- Public Review of the Draft document is next
- The final document will be presented for acceptance by the County Commissioners and others, target date by March 31, 2005

Slide  
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### Recommendations

- WUI Safety & Policy
- People & Structures
- Infrastructure
- Resources & Capabilities
- Regional Land Management Recommendations

Are we accomplishing these goals?

Slide  
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## **2.3 Review of the WUI Wildfire Mitigation Plan**

Review of sections of this document were conducted by the planning committee during the planning process as maps, summaries, and written assessments were completed. These individuals included fire mitigation specialists, fire fighters, planners, elected officials, and others involved in the coordination process. Preliminary findings were discussed at the public meetings, where comments were collected and facilitated.

The results of these formal and informal reviews were integrated into the Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan. This plan was given to members of the planning committee on February 22, 2005. The committee review process lasted from February 22, 2005 through March 8, 2005. Committee comments were integrated into a revised document which was distributed for public review on March 14, 2005. Formal public review lasted until March 25, 2005, although comments were received until April 1, 2005, and integrated into the final plan.

The Clearwater County Board of County Commissioners met on April 4, 2005, and formally adopted the final Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan (signature pages). Additional municipalities, agencies, and organizations adopted the plan as indicated on the signature pages of this document.

## **2.4 Continued Public Involvement**

Clearwater County is dedicated to involving the public directly in review and updates of the Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Clearwater County Commissioners, through the Interface Hazard Mitigation Committee are responsible for the annual review and update of the plan as recommended in the "Recommendations" section of this document.

The public will have the opportunity to provide feedback about the Plan annually on the anniversary of the adoption of this plan, at the meeting of the County Commissioners. Copies of the Plan will be catalogued and kept at all of the appropriate agencies in the county. The existence and location of these copies will be publicized. Instructions on how to obtain copies of the plan will be made available on the County's Internet web site. The Plan also includes the address and phone number of the county Planning Division, responsible for keeping track of public comments on the Plan.

In addition, copies of the plan and any proposed changes will be posted on the county website. This site will also contain an email address and phone number to which people can direct their comments and concerns.

A public meeting will also be held as part of each annual evaluation or when deemed necessary by the Interface Hazard Mitigation Committee. The meetings will provide the public a forum for which they can express its concerns, opinions, or ideas about the Plan. The County Public Information Officer will be responsible for using county resources to publicize the annual public meetings and maintain public involvement through the public access channel, webpage, and newspapers.